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Some Recent Art Acquisitions in American Museums

BY HERBERT MORRIS

THE Minneapolis Institute of Fine Arts has recently acquired from Messrs. R. C. and N. M. Vose of Boston an unusually fine landscape by Jules Dupré, known as the *Fontainbleu Oaks*. This canvas was purchased from Dupré in the early 'Eighties and is one of his finest landscapes. It is, in its way, as lovely as *The Old Oak* in the Louvre collection, and even more than that masterpiece exhibits the vigor which characterizes Dupré's art. As Hourticq truly says, Dupré "was not content

merely to record an episodic, curious, or amusing effect; he did not scatter his attention by rendering the grass, the moss and the little branches with too great particularity. He composes strongly, and sacrifices a host of details to a robust general effect; his large masses are well placed, the most brilliant lights in the centre, the whole solid and compact. Beside the contrast of light, the plays of color are pushed to an extreme. In his fat impasto we divine, as in a work of Decamps a complicated chemistry,



Courtesy R. C. and N. M. Vose

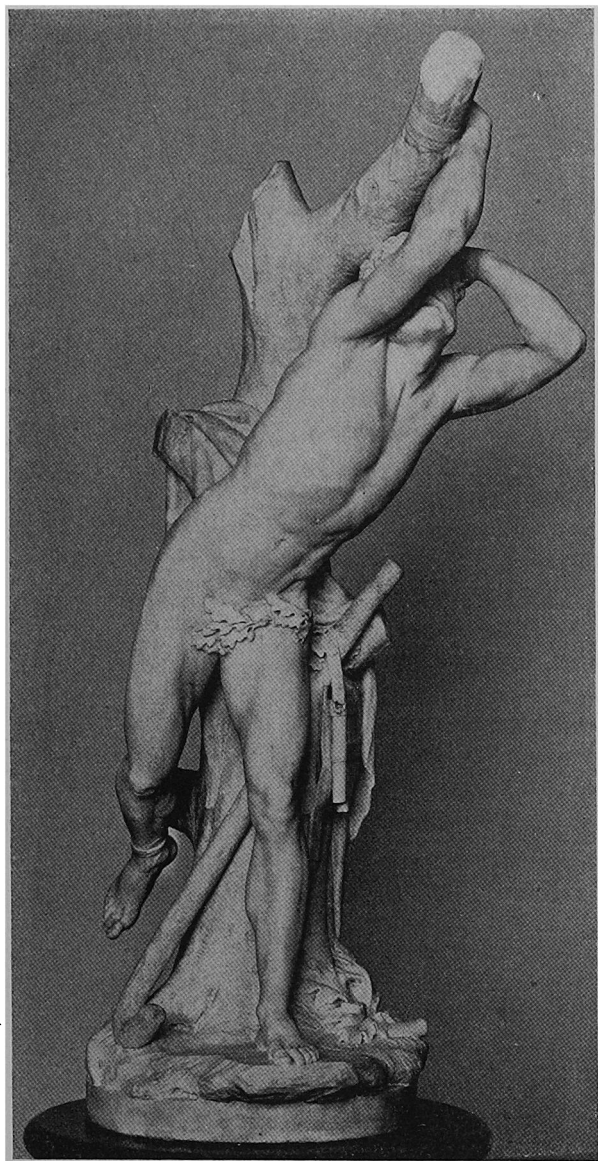
FONTAINBLEU OAKS BY JULES DUPRÉ. MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS



THE SEATED VIOLINIST. PASTEL DRAWING BY EDGAR DEGAS

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

learned combinations by means of which the utmost is won from color. In this thick color deep greens merge into russet tones, with a strong yet gentle effect, as in the autumn woods. The sketch from Nature was transformed in the studio; a tree, a house, a flock of sheep, the simple realistic motive, was amplified and iso-



Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art
MARSYAS. BY PIERRE PUGET

lated, till it took on an august majesty; an exact study of landscape soon became a romantic scene."

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, rich in so many examples of the modern masters of painting, still lacks a canvas by Edgar Degas. Fortunately ten fine drawings by this great French artist have been acquired recently for the Museum collection. Mr. Bryson Burroughs writes of them in the Bulletin of the Museum as follows: "They were bought in Paris in December, 1918, at a sale of his works left in the studio at his

death, and bear the mark of this sale, and facsimile of his signature stamped in red. Three, the earliest of the group, still displaying the influence of the manner of Ingres, are portraits of Edouard Manet, the painter. These are in lead pencil on slightly tinted paper." Then there are two drawings, a *Portrait of Mme. Loubens* and a *Portrait of Mme. Lisle*. These are of a date later than the Manet subjects. The finest of the drawings is *The Seated Violinist* here reproduced, a remarkably virile color sketch in pastel. This, one may venture to guess, was a careful study made by Degas in preparation of one of his Ballet subjects. The *Portrait of Emile Duranty* (1833-1880), is like *The Seated Violinist*, a masterpiece. The drawing *Library Table and Book Shelves* was made in preparation of a painting for the *Portrait of Duranty in His Library* done in 1879. Emile Duranty, editor and novelist, was one of the high-priests of Realism in France in the 'Sixties. His *Les Marionnettes du Théâtre des Tuileries* is, alas, almost forgotten. Two drawings of nudes complete this Degas collection. Degas' drawings of the nude are remarkable. They may not be "heroic" nor yet "idealistic," but they are very wonderful drawings of the types he choose to portray.

The art activity of France from 1670 to 1685 was centered upon the decoration of Versailles. Pierre Puget (1622-1694) alone kept apart from the center of these activities. True it is that his group *Milo of Crotona* is to be found in the park, but that was all he sent. Puget remained in Toulon busying himself with the decoration of the royal ships, much to the satisfaction of Colbert who looked upon Versailles as merely a royal caprice. A white marble statue, *Marsyas*, has been acquired this year by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which work, although neither signed, nor so far as I have been able to discover, recorded, is, without question, from the hand of Puget, bearing, as it does, the marks of his genius. The Marsyas was probably completed between the years 1658-1668.